



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

December 10, 2020
Regular Monthly Meeting

Present: Nancy Salamoun, Staff Liaison, Mgr. of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Lara Versari, Commissioner
Michael Henson, Commissioner

Guests: Irma Flores, Somerviva/Office of Immigrant Affairs

Public: Amy Henson
Keidrick Roy
Derrick Rice
Sidd Pattanayak
Michael He
Christopher Spicer Hankle

Welcome and Introductions

Meeting commenced on December 10, 2020 at 6:35pm.

Presentation:

Irma Flores, Community Engagement Specialist at the Somerviva/Office of Immigrant Affairs was present to discuss her work and opportunities to collaborate with the Commission.

Irma has been with Somerviva for eight years and works with residents who speak Spanish. Somerviva/Office of Immigrant Affairs is part of the City's Communications Department and has community engagement specialists who speak Spanish, Haitian Creole, Nepali and Portuguese. The Office's mission is to ensure that every resident has access to City services. Irma mentioned that aside from language barriers, residents that she works with face additional barriers such as discrimination and racism.

Irma would like to see the Commission be able to handle the follow-ups in these cases. She is looking for a place to refer people who have experienced racism and discrimination and is hopeful that this is something that the Commission can do. It would also be important to do the work to promote different cultures. Irma also mentioned that it would be important to educate the public about their rights and have a place to refer them. Irma can utilize her access to media and tv show to promote this information.

Members of the public present that it would be helpful for residents to have a space to come forward and talk about what is happening. Others felt that it would be important to amplify community voices and to highlight individual experiences. We could utilize platforms such as Scat tv to educate the public and to provide better community initiatives.

Irma is interested in returning to speak with the Commission at a future date to discuss these ideas further.

Membership Discussion/ Next Steps Planning

Hate Crime Online Form

Following November's discussion with the Commission, Sargent Perrone developed an anonymous online form for reporting hate crimes in the City. The form can be found at: <https://form.jotform.com/203414035640140>

The Commissioners and members of the public present would like to better understand the process after reporting the abuse. Where does this information go, how is it handled, who handles it? Is this provided in different languages? Are there different ways to link to the form and where else can this information live?

The Commission would like to invite Sargent Perrone to an upcoming meeting early in 2021.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Event

This event is being pre-recorded and will air on January 18, 2021.

A supplemental meeting to discuss the event is scheduled for December 21, 2020 from 6pm-7pm.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:00pm